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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Monday, February 20, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOW THE HUBBARDS REMODELED THEIR HOUSE." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering. U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today's story has a happy ending. Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Hubbard, of Evansville, Wisconsin, are the satisfied owners of an extensively remodeled farm home. Mark that word "satisfied". Mrs. Hubbard is satisfied, I am sure. She says: "Now I feel as though my house were in order. I never felt that way before. I only wish we had undertaken the job of remodeling sooner, instead of getting along as we did." And if Mrs. Hubbard feels that way about it, I daresay Mr. Hubbard does, too.

The Hubbard farm has been in the family nearly 100 years. One part of the house was built 72 years ago, other parts added on later. According to modern standards the house was neither comfortable nor convenient nor attractive to look at. Agricultural engineers assisted the Hubbards in planning to modernize their home because the family agreed to cooperate in a special housing study. The U. S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Wisconsin were interested in finding out what remodeling features are of most benefit. The Hubbards permitted the engineers to make "before" and "after" studies in the house. For instance, temperature readings were taken in the different rooms, to determine their comfort, or lack of it. And when the lack of conveniences was noted in the "before" records, recommendations were made which were carried out by the Hubbard family.

In the remodeled house the dining-room and the living-room, were interchanged. This was because the former room was considerably larger and better located. That made it necessary to use the downstairs bed-room for a kitchen, so as to have it next to the new dining-room. This new kitchen was made much more convenient than the old one.

The old kitchen wing was completely changed. By extending it along the back of the house, the Hubbards were able to have a back entry and wash-room which had been very much needed. They made the old kitchen area into a sun-room. The old kitchen used to be a passageway between the back door and other parts of the house. The men coming in from work would track through the room to wash at the sink. They had no place to change from work clothes.

In the remodeled house the back entry connects with a back hall and the stairs to the second floor, as well as with the kitchen. The back entry has a lavatory, and a place to hang up work clothes. A door leads from it inside.

the house to the basement stairs. Formerly the basement was reached only by going outdoors, even to fire the furnace in midwinter. The back hall leads to the sun-room, which opens into the living-room. The sun-room could be used for the farm office, but at present, Mr. Hubbard keeps his desk and papers in the entry-wash-room.

There were some major changes in the basement, too. It was excavated under more of the house. That made space for a laundry. The old chimney was torn down and an entirely new one built. This was located much better for the furnace than the old one. By putting two flues in it, one for the heating plant and one for a fireplace, they were able to carry out a long-cherished dream. That was to have an open fire in the living-room.

Well, that is a quick summary of the major changes in the layout of the house. But it doesn't cover all the details by any means. Let's look at some of those details.

There was no bath, no running water or sewage disposal in the house. "Open-air plumbing" facilities were 60 feet from the house. There was only one closet in the whole house, and that was on the second floor. Floors, woodwork, and walls were in poor condition. The house was drafty and very hard to heat, due to poorly fitted doors and windows and other poor construction.

To make the house warmer and more comfortable in winter, the Hubbards used good insulation. They stopped cracks around windows and door-frames and eliminated drafts. They put on storm windows and storm doors. Now every room in the house can be kept uniformly warm. Formerly the floors were cold, and the lower part of each room, as shown by temperature readings, was much colder than the upper layers of air. All these improvements also resulted in considerable saving in fuel.

The rearrangement of the kitchen equipment provided a good working route from one task to another, better light and cross ventilation. Mrs. Hubbard says she has five times as much cupboard space as before. The new location of the kitchen permits a view of the driveway and outbuildings. That's a necessary feature of a conveniently arranged farmstead. There's a dining-area in the kitchen where everyday meals can be eaten comfortably.

An unfinished attic space on the second floor was used for a large new bed-room to take the place of the first-floor bed-room that was turned into a kitchen. There was space next to this bed-room for a bath-room, and for two hall closets. The new bed-room has two closets, and each of the other three has one. There's a towel closet in the bath-room, making eight closets on the second floor, where formerly there was only one. Mrs. Hubbard says she doesn't see how she ever managed without this storage space. Downstairs, there's a vestibule closet for coats and wraps, the closet for chore clothes in the back entry, and two corner cupboards in the new dining-room.

Mrs. Hubbard also likes the abundance of electric outlets and convenient switches; the cross ventilation in each bed-room; the deck off the east bed-room, over the sun-room; the clothes chute to the basement. But probably most of all, she is glad to have running water piped into the house, and a sewage disposal system to take care of wastes.

Few of us could make as many changes as the Hubbards have. But these improvements show what is possible with a good plan. If any of you are thinking of modernizing your homes, you may like to know that the U. S. Department of Agriculture has some helpful free publications on the subject. Many of the state agricultural colleges also have suitable house plans, available for a small sum, that are especially designed for the climate and conditions of their particular state.

